

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The action by the Examiner of this application, together with the cited references, have been given careful consideration. Following such consideration, claims 1, and 13 have been amended to define more clearly the patentable invention applicant believes is disclosed herein. Moreover, claims 3, 8-12, and 15 have been cancelled. Claims 2, 4-7, 14, 16-18 are unchanged by the present amendment paper. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the claims in their present form, together with the following comments, and allow the application.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Appropriate corrections have been made by amendment. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner now withdraw the 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph rejection.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,325,042 to Brown and U.S. Patent No. 4,989,369 to Maass. It is respectfully submitted that neither Brown nor Maass, taken individually or in combination, teaches or suggests the applicant's invention as defined by the present claims.

Claim 1 now recites (in part):

a seal portion having *a substantially concave outer surface defining a plurality of sealing edges engageable with a sealing surface surrounding the cavity;*

first and second flexible side walls, each of said first and second flexible side walls connected between the base portion and the seal portion; and

an inflatable inner cavity defined by the base portion, the seal portion, and the first and second flexible side walls, wherein said first and second flexible side walls flex in response to inflation of the inner cavity to force the plurality of sealing edges into engagement with the sealing surface, *said concave outer surface maintaining a concave shape when the inner cavity is inflated.*

Similarly, independent claim 13 now recites (in part):

a seal portion having *a substantially concave outer surface defining a plurality of sealing edges engageable with a sealing surface surrounding the cavity;*

first and second flexible side walls, each of said first and second flexible side walls connected between the base portion and the seal portion; and

an inflatable inner cavity defined by the base portion, the seal portion, and the first and second flexible side walls, wherein said first and second flexible side walls flex in response to inflation of the inner cavity to force the plurality of sealing edges into engagement with the sealing surface, *said concave outer surface maintaining a concave shape when the inner cavity is inflated.*

As can be seen in FIG. 3 of Brown, the outer surface of Brown's seal (see reference no. 21) will *change from concave to convex* when Brown's seal is inflated (see inflated position 18). In contrast, in the present invention as defined by independent claims 1 and 13, the substantially concave outer surface maintains a concave shape when the inner cavity is inflated. The substantially concave outer surface defines the plurality of sealing edges that are engageable with the sealing surface. Maass's seal also fails to teach or suggest a substantially concave outer surface that maintains a concave shape when the inner cavity is inflated. In fact, Maass's seal 19 is not configured to inflate.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 13 are patentable over the cited references.

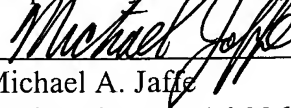
The remaining claims depend from independent claims 1 and 13. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons set forth above in connection with independent claims 1 and 13.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes there are any further matters that need to be discussed in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

If there are any fees necessitated by the foregoing communication, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0537, referencing our Docket No. ST8632US.

Date: February 28, 2005

Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence (along with any paper referenced as being attached or enclosed) is being deposited on the below date with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Date: February 28, 2005



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